



State of Louisiana
Department of Social Services
Office of the Secretary

NEWS RELEASE

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DSS Prepares to Open New Disaster Food Stamp Program Sites

BATON ROUGE – The Louisiana Department of Social Services has received approval from the USDA for approval to open Disaster Food Stamp application sites in Washington and Franklin parishes for residents impacted by Hurricane Gustav and to open sites in six new parishes due to damage from Hurricane Ike. Those additional parishes are: Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, Jefferson Davis, Sabine and Vernon.

A total of 14 parishes will receive benefits for both Ike and Gustav. In addition to the parishes listed above, Acadia, Iberia, Jefferson, Lafourche, Plaquemines, St. Mary, Terrebonne and Vermilion are eligible for the assistance. Attached is a map that illustrates the parishes and their eligibility for this program.

New sites that will open tomorrow, September 19th are listed below:

Beauregard Parish, VFW Post 3619, 1115 Highway 27, DeRidder
Calcasieu Parish, Lake Charles Civic Center, 900 Lakeshore Drive, Lake Charles
Franklin Parish, River of Life Church, 127 Ellis Lane, Winnsboro
Jefferson Davis Parish, Multi-Purpose Building, 810 South Lake Arthur Avenue, Jennings
Sabine Parish, Central Fire Station, 1710 San Antonio Avenue, Many
Vernon Parish, Old Lowe's Building, 1111 Boone Street, Leesville
Washington Parish, Old National Guard Armory, 104 Avenue B, Bogalusa
Washington Parish, Old Franklinton Elementary School, 902 Cleveland Street, Franklinton

Sites that will open September 21st

Sabine Parish, Zwolle Fiesta Grounds, 1100 South Main, Zwolle

Sites that will open September 22nd:

Jefferson Davis Parish, Father John Windt Hall, 515 Bryan Street, Jennings

These sites will open at 8 a.m. and take applications through 6 p.m. except for Calcasieu which will open at 6 a.m. DSS estimates that an additional 150,000 residents will be eligible for Disaster Food Stamps under this new program.

In order to reduce lines during the initial round of applications, DSS has worked with local officials to institute a system that would sort application dates by using the last names of those seeking benefits. Applicants would be sorted as follows:

- Day One (September 19): A-C
- Day Two (September 20): D-G
- Day Three (September 21): H-L
- Day Four (September 22): M-R
- Day Five (September 23): S-Z

This would be followed by two open days (September 24 and September 25) where all applicants regardless of name would be able to apply. This system will work for both Louisiana residents and evacuees from Texas who took refuge here from Hurricane Ike. “Governor Jindal’s top priority is that applicants do not have to wait in long lines and are made comfortable in air conditioning with water and healthy snacks,” said Interim Secretary Kristy Nichols. “This will depend in large part on applicants ensuring that they come to the application centers on the correct day. We must all work together to make sure this program runs as efficiently as possible so our residents can get the help they need.”

Those who have already received benefits from Hurricane Gustav do not need to reapply. Their additional benefits will be automatically uploaded onto their Electronic Benefit Cards.

Today, DSS met with USDA officials and received word that Louisiana had been approved to open additional Hurricane Gustav sites, but for those parishes impacted by both Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, the federal government must assess the economic hardship of the Ike-impacted parishes in order to determine whether or not residents there warrant another month of benefits.

“I am continuing to encourage USDA to grant Louisianans impacted by both storms benefits for both September and October,” continued Ms. Nichols. “Residents in some areas have been dramatically impacted by Gustav and Ike and need time and assistance to get back on their feet. We will work with USDA on this request, but at this time we do not have approval for any additional Ike related benefits.”

If the request by DSS is granted, no one who already has a Gustav benefit card will need to reapply.

Applicants are asked to continue to monitor the Department of Social Service’s website as well as news reports for the most current information regarding site openings and hours of operation.

Participants in the regular state Food Stamp Program do not need to apply for disaster aid because any revised benefits will automatically be added to their current Electronic Benefit card.

Individuals with disabilities can designate an authorized representative to apply for Disaster Food Stamps on their behalf. Also, each site manager has developed special procedures for assisting the disabled. Applicants with these special needs should make themselves known to the site manager or staff at the site

In order to help the elderly, Council on Aging staff members have been trained to administer Disaster Food Stamps. People 60 years of age or older should contact their local parish Councils on Aging for the nearest Disaster Food Stamp Assistance Application Site for seniors. If the local

Council on Aging is not available, seniors should contact the Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs at 1-877-340-9100.

For information about the schedules of the sites and to learn who is eligible to receive Disaster Food Stamps visit: www.dss.state.la.us or call 1-888-LAHELPU (1-888-524-3578).